

BBB Wise Giving Report for AVANCE

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Charity Contact Information

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AVANCE
4281 Dacoma
Houston, TX 77092
(713) 812-0033
URL: www.avance.org

General

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Year/State Incorporated: 1988, TX
Tax Exempt Status: 501(c)3
Chief Executive: Jose Villarreal, Executive Director
Paid staff size: 327

BBB Wise Giving Alliance Comments

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This organization has been evaluated in relation to the 20 BBB Standards for Charitable Accountability. This organization meets all those Standards.

Notes

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The excess revenue is available for future program use.

Purpose

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Mission:
"AVANCE unlocks America's potential by strengthening families in at risk communities through the most effective parenting education and support programs. We do this by enhancing parenting skills, promoting family literacy and providing early childhood development programs. The AVANCE programs nurture the development of children by focusing on their educational success and fostering the personal and economic success of the families."

Programs

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AVANCE, Inc. focuses on parent education, early childhood development, brain development, literacy, and school readiness. This charity serves predominantly poor Latino families in underserved communities.

Their nine-month core program caters to parents with children from 0-3 years of age, operating in housing projects, community centers and schools. AVANCE instructors guide parents through the stages of emotional, physical, social and cognitive development of their children with special topics that range from the importance of reading and effective discipline to nutrition. Parents also attend classes in literacy, learning English and attaining a GED. AVANCE reaches more than 20,000 individuals annually in centers and chapter sites throughout Texas and Los Angeles, California.

Program Services Expenses: *

Total: \$18,893,215

*All figures taken from AVANCE, Inc.'s audited financial statements from the fiscal year ended June 30, 2007.

Fund Raising

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This organization raised funds through personal visits, self-conducted events/dinners, foundation and/or corporate grants, and government grants/contracts.

Financial

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According to the CPA audit for fiscal year ended 06/30/07:

Total Income.....: \$ 20,638,951
Programs.....: \$ 18,893,215 92.12% of total expenses
Fund Raising.....: \$ 118,630 0.58% of total expenses
Administrative.....: \$ 1,497,989 7.30% of total expenses
Total Expenses.....: \$ 20,509,834 100.00%
Excess for the year...: \$ 129,117*
Ending Net Assets.....: \$ 2,312,428

* The item titled "Excess for the year" shows the portion of income remaining after expenses.

Complaints

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The BBB processed no complaints about this business in the last 36 months, our standard reporting period.

Disclaimer

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This **Report** may be based on materials provided voluntarily by the organization within the past two years. An organization may change its practices at any time without notice. Please understand that a BBB **Report** is furnished solely to assist donors in making their own judgment. This **Report** is not to be used for fund raising or promotional purposes. Copyright 2008, BBB.

Tips

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Ten Tips for Better Giving

Most charities are honest and ethical, but questionable solicitors are counting on the fact that you won't bother to check out the charity before you give. Here is some basic wise giving advice:

1. Watch out for similar names.
As there are many charities raising funds for similar causes, some charity names sound the same. Be sure to look at the name carefully, because the charity soliciting you may not be the one you have in mind.
2. Do not be pressured to make an immediate gift.
Be wary of solicitors that demand an 'on the spot' donation. Charities should welcome your gift whenever you want to send it.
3. Question vague appeals.
Appeals should clearly identify the charity's programs. Watch out for appeals that are strong on identifying a problem, but weak on describing what specifically the charity intends to do about it.
4. Do not give out personal information to phone solicitors. Don't give out credit card numbers, checking account numbers or any other personal information to unknown telephone solicitors.
5. Do not give cash. Write a check out to the charity's full official name, not to an individual or third party that may be collecting the donation.
6. Keep records of your donations (receipts, canceled checks and bank statements) so you can document your charitable giving at tax time. (Note: The IRS requires donations of \$250 or more to be substantiated through a written receipt from the charity.)
7. If you want a deduction, make sure the organization is a charity. There are many different types of soliciting nonprofit organizations. Most appeals will indicate if the organization is eligible to receive gifts deductible as charitable contributions. (To be sure, review the list of organizations in IRS Publication 78 or ask the charity for a copy of its tax exempt status determination letter.)
8. Don't hesitate to ask the charity for written information on its programs and finances. This tip can be particularly helpful in responding to phone appeals from charities that interest you.
9. To verify if a charity is registered to solicit, contact your state government. In most cases, this will be the state's office of the attorney general. Remember that the state registration does not mean 'approval', it means the group has filed the appropriate forms.
10. **Report** bad practices.
Contact your Better Business Bureau and your state's Attorney General office about solicitation problems.

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Standards

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Better Business Bureau Standards for Charity Accountability

1. A board of directors that provides adequate oversight of the charity's operations and its staff.
2. A board of directors with a minimum of five voting members.
3. A minimum of three evenly spaced meetings per year of the full governing body with a majority in attendance, with face-to-face participation.
4. Not more than one or 10% (whichever is greater) directly or indirectly compensated person(s) serving as voting member(s) of the board. Compensated members shall not serve as the board's chair or treasurer.
5. No transaction(s) in which any board or staff members have material conflicting interests with the charity resulting from any relationship or business affiliation.
6. Have a board policy of assessing, no less than every two years, the organization's performance and effectiveness and of determining future actions required to achieve its mission.
7. Submit to the organization's governing body, for its approval, a written **Report** that outlines the results of the aforementioned performance and effectiveness assessment and recommendations for future actions.
8. Spend at least 65% of its total expenses on program activities.
9. Spend no more than 35% of related contributions on fund raising. Related contributions include donations, legacies and other gifts received as a result of fund raising efforts.
10. Avoid accumulating funds that could be used for current program activities. To meet this standard, the charity's unrestricted net assets available for use should not be more than three times the size of the past year's expenses or three times the size of the current year's budget, whichever is higher.
11. Make available to all, on request, complete annual financial statements prepared in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles.
12. Include in the financial statements a breakdown of expenses (e.g., salaries, travel, postage, etc.) that shows what portion of these expenses was allocated to program, fund raising, and administrative activities.
13. Accurately **Report** the charity's expenses, including any joint cost allocations, in its financial statements.
14. Have a board-approved annual budget for its current fiscal year, outlining projected expenses for major program activities, fund raising, and administration.
15. Have solicitations and informational materials, distributed by any means, that are accurate, truthful and not misleading, both in whole and in part.
16. Have an annual **Report** available to all, on request, that includes:
 - (a) the organization's mission statement,
 - (b) a summary of the past year's program service accomplishments,
 - (c) a roster of the officers and members of the board of directors,
 - (d) financial information that includes (i) total income in the past fiscal year, (ii) expenses in the same program, fund raising and administrative categories as in the financial statements, and (iii) ending net assets.
17. Include on any charity websites that solicit contributions, the same information that is recommended for annual reports, as well as the mailing address of the charity and electronic access to its most recent IRS Form 990.
18. Address privacy concerns of donors by
 - (a) providing in written appeals, at least annually, a means (e.g., such as a check off box) for both new and continuing donors to inform the charity if they do not want their name and address shared outside the organization, and
 - (b) providing a clear, prominent and easily accessible privacy policy on any of its websites that tells visitors (i) what information, if any, is being collected about them by the charity and how this information will be used, (ii) how to contact the charity to review personal information collected and request corrections, (iii) how to inform the charity (e.g., a check off box) that the visitor does not wish his/her personal information to be shared outside the organization, and (iv) what security measures the charity has in place to protect personal information.
19. Clearly disclose how the charity benefits from the sale of products or services (i.e., cause-related marketing) that state or imply that a charity will benefit from a consumer sale or transaction. Such promotions should disclose, at the point of solicitation:
 - (a) the actual or anticipated portion of the purchase price that will benefit the charity (e.g., 5 cents will be contributed to abc charity for every xyz company product sold),
 - (b) the duration of the campaign (e.g., the month of October),
 - (c) any maximum or guaranteed minimum contribution amount (e.g., up to a maximum of \$200,000).
20. Respond promptly to and act on complaints brought to its attention by the BBB Wise Giving Alliance and/or local Better Business Bureaus about fund raising practices, privacy policy violations and/or other issues.

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